

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Commission Order ACP-323699-25

Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Planning Authority: Galway County Council

Application for permission under section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, including an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Natura Impact Statement, lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 19th day of September 2025 by RWE Renewables Ireland Limited care of Fehily Timoney and Company, Core House, Pouladuff Road, Cork.

Proposed development: The proposed development comprises of the following:

- Construction of 11 number wind turbines with a ground to blade tip height range of 179.25 metres to 180 metres. The wind turbines will have a rotor diameter ranging from 149.1 metres to 155 metres and a hub height ranging from 102.5 metres to 105 metres.
- Construction of permanent turbine foundations and crane pad hardstanding areas and associated drainage;
- Construction of 13,725 metres of internal access tracks and associated drainage infrastructure (of which 1,770 metres will be floated road);
- Upgrading of 3,565 metres of existing tracks and road and associated drainage infrastructure;
- Construction of 1,180 metres of temporary access track to facilitate Horizontal Directional Drilling cable crossing of the Togher River;

- Creation of one number new construction and operation access to the wind farm Site from the L-2234 local road and one road crossing of the L-2220-21 local road;
- All associated drainage and sediment control including interceptor drains, cross drains, settlement ponds and swales;
- Installation of new watercourse crossings including one number 18.5 metres single span bridge crossing and 14 new piped culverts;
- All associated excavation, earthworks and spoil management;
- Three number temporary construction compounds and associated ancillary infrastructure including parking;
- Construction of one number permanent onsite 110 kilovolt electrical substation, associated new access road off of the L-6100 local road, and associated construction compound including: Welfare facilities; Electrical infrastructure; Parking; Wastewater holding tank; Rainwater harvesting tank; and Security fencing;
- Works associated with the connection of the wind farm to the national electricity grid, which will be via a loop-in 110 kilovolt underground cable connection 650 metres in length to the existing Cashla-Dalton 110 kilovolt overhead line in the townland of Tonacooleen, with two new 16 metres high steel loop-in lattice tower end masts for loop-in connection at the connection point.
- Installation of 33 kilovolt medium voltage electrical and communication cabling underground between the proposed turbines and the proposed on-site substation and associated ancillary works including Control Building;
- Erection of one number permanent meteorological mast to a height of 110 metres above ground level with a 4 metres lightning pole on top.
- Turbine Delivery Accommodation works:
 - R332 / L6483 Junction (Beagh townland) - temporary load bearing surface will be laid and the drainage ditch temporarily culverted. Vegetation will be cleared. One utility pole will be temporarily removed.
 - On the L6483 (Beagh, Cloonweelaun and Ironpool townlands), temporary load bearing surface will be laid to provide a minimum 4.5 metres running width and a 5.5 metres clearance width for turbine delivery.

- L6483 (Ironpool townland) – temporary load bearing surface will be laid and vegetation will be cleared. Two road signs will be temporarily removed.
- Felling of 0.54 hectare of conifer plantation forestry;
- 2,032 metres Treeline/hedgerow removal; and
- 9.7 hectares of Biodiversity Enhancement lands plus 2,457.50 metres of hedgerow/treeline planting.

This application is seeking a ten-year permission and a 30-year operational life from the date of full commissioning of the entire wind farm (including meteorological mast) all located within the townlands of Beagh, Beagh More, Cloonbar, Cloonweelaun, Cloonnaglasha, Cloonteen, Corillaun, Derrymore, Ironpool, Shancloon, Toberroe and Tonacooleen, County Galway.

Decision

Refuse permission under section 37G of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for the above proposed development in accordance with the said plans and particulars based on the reasons and considerations under.

Determine under section 37H(2)(c) the sum to be paid by the applicant in respect of costs associated with the application as set out in the Schedule of Costs below.

Reasons and Considerations

The Commission made its decision consistent with:

- (a) Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, and the requirement to, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy,

national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans set out in those Plans and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.

In performing its functions in relation to the making of its decision, the Commission had regard to:

(a) European legislation, including of particular relevance:

- The relevant provisions of EU Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment,
- Directive 2000/60/EC, the Water Framework Directive and the requirement to exercise its functions in a manner which is consistent with the provisions of the Directive and which achieves or promotes compliance with the requirements of the Directive.
- Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directive) which set the requirements for Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union.
- EU Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC which aims to promote the use of renewable energy and amending Directive EU/2023/2413 which aims to speed up the EU's clean energy transition as implemented by European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (S.I. 274 of 2025).
- Directive 2011/92/EU (The EIA Directive) as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU as implemented by Article 94 and Schedule 6 (paragraphs 1 and 2) of the Planning Regulations as amended.
- REPowerEU Plan 2022 and Directive EU 2018/2001, as amended on the 18th day of May 2022
- European Wind Action Plan 2023
- The European Green Deal 2020

(b) National and regional planning and related policy, including:

- The National long-term Climate Action Strategy, entitled Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions 2024
- The National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2024
- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework ("NPF"), First Revision of the NPF and the National Development Plan ("NDP 2021-2030)
- National Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030
- Wind Energy Development Guidelines: Guidelines for planning authorities 2006 and the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019

(c) Regional and local planning policy, including

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES): Northern and Western Region
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Other relevant national policy and guidance documents.
- The nature, scale and design of the proposed development as set out in the planning application and the pattern of development in the vicinity.
- The likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the proposed development and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on European Sites.
- The reports of the planning authority received in response to same.
- The submissions made on the planning application to the Commission in connection with the application.
- The report and the recommendation of the Inspector, including the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to appropriate assessment and environmental impact assessment.
- The expert reports of specialist consultants
- The revised Renewable Energy Directive (REDIII).

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information provided by the developer, the Commission concludes that it is not possible to exclude that the proposed development alone or in combination with other plans and projects will give rise to significant effects on Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000297), Lough Mask Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004062), Lough Corrib Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004042) and Shrute Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000525) in view of the sites' conservation objectives and that a stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was required.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2:

In screening the need for Appropriate Assessment, it was determined that the proposed development could result in significant effects on Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000297), Lough Corrib Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004042), Lough Mask Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004062) and Shrute Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000525), in view of the conservation objectives of those sites, and that Appropriate Assessment under the provisions of Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended was required.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the Natura Impact Statement, all associated material submitted and taking into account observations by prescribed bodies, third parties and the reports of specialist consultants, the Commission considers that adverse effects on site integrity of Lough Corrib Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004042), and Lough Mask Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004062) can be excluded in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

However, the evidence presented does not robustly support the lack of potential effects on Shrute Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000525), and Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000297), due to the lack of an overarching, three dimensional and transient, consistent conceptual

hydrogeological model that links the local and site level geology and hydrology. On this basis, the Commission is not satisfied that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of adverse effects.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The Commission completed an environmental impact assessment of the proposed development taking account of:

- (a) the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development,
- (b) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and associated documentation submitted in support of the application,
- (c) the Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted in support of the application,
- (d) the planning authority reports, and the submissions received from the observers and prescribed bodies,
- (e) the specialist consultants reports and,
- (f) the Inspector's report.

The Commission considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the developer, adequately identifies a number of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment, except with regards to matters pertaining to biodiversity and hydrogeology as indicated in the reasoned conclusion on the significant effects on the environment hereunder.

The Commission agreed with the examination, as set out in the Inspector's report, of the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted by the developer and submissions made in the course of the application.

Reasoned Conclusions on the Significant Effects

The Commission considered, and agreed with the Inspector's reasoned conclusions, that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment are as follows:

- **Population & Human Health:** Short term direct and indirect negative effects during the construction phase by way of noise, vibration, dust and traffic. Negative impacts will be mitigated by a managed approach to construction as set out in Construction Environmental Management Plan and the Traffic Management Plan. Long term negative direct and cumulative effects on landscape character and visual impacts in the immediate area will result from the proposed development with visual effects being more pronounced where open views of the site are available. Longer term potential for noise, shadow flicker and visual impacts mitigated by distance from residential dwellings, intervening vegetation and topography. Short term positive effects for the local economy during construction and longer term positive effects arising from the community benefit fund.
- **Biodiversity:** Long term loss of habitats improved agricultural grassland, cutover bog, scrub, dry grassland mosaics) within the proposed development footprint with potential for temporary deterioration of aquatic habitats and works areas. Potential for degradation or loss of aquatic habitat of ecological value during works through indirect effects resulting from water pollution. Construction of floated access road to T11 along the periphery of Cloonbar Bog will encroach into uncut raised bog and result in disruption to groundwater flow feeding the groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystem. Habitat loss and disturbance to terrestrial fauna and potential damage to badger sett within the site during construction works. Collision risk to bats low to moderate mitigated by feathering and curtailment. With regard to habitat classification of Cloonbar East Wetland, having regard to the submissions on file the adequacy of botanical survey has not been verified. With regard to the biodiversity enhancement measures outlined in the Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan and the proposal for marsh fritillary habitat enhancement, the adequacy of habitat appraisal and species survey to characterise the

marsh fritillary resource at a functionally meaningful scale has not been demonstrated. With regard to the construction of floated access road to T11 along the periphery of Cloonbar Bog and noting that active raised bog is a priority habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive it has been concluded that on the basis of the information submitted there is insufficient site and project specific peatland evidence to support a robust independent appraisal of the conservation value of Cloonbar bog and the likely implications of the proposed development for peatland ecology and bog restoration.

- **Ornithology:** Potential loss of habitat disturbance and collision risk. Significant effects are not predicted for a large proportion of recorded species. The conclusion that the lands within the zone of influence may not perform a functional role for Greenland White-fronted geese has been questioned in terms of the interpretation of the ecological functionality of the wider turlough rich landscape given the absence of a habitat based analysis. With regard to the collision risk modelling a degree of caution is noted in terms of conclusions reached in the context of the location of the site within a complex turlough-rich wetland habitat.
- **Land, soil, water, air and climate:** The excavation of peat, subsoils and bedrock has the potential for direct and indirect effects on water quality, particularly during construction, alterations to flow paths, changes to hydro morphology, risk of flooding, peat instability and failure and localised effects on air quality. The lack of an evidence based conceptual hydrogeological model means that the connectivity between the site and the proposed development and local groundwater linked receptors including turloughs, streams and rivers and private wells/boreholes cannot be established. Efficacy of mitigation measures cannot be verified. Regarding climate, the proposed development will have a long-term positive effect on climate. The supply of renewable electricity to the national grid will displace carbon dioxide emissions otherwise used to generate electricity.
- **Archaeology, cultural heritage, landscape and material assets:** Potential for direct adverse effects on sub-surface archaeology, and the indirect landscape and visual effect of the proposed development on the setting of

features of cultural heritage, with greatest effects on features within relative close proximity to the site. Landscape visual effects will be mitigated by the distance of the proposed development from these features, the character of the landscape in which the site is situated and landscape features which will screen the visual effects of the proposed development and protect the local setting of these features. Significant effects on the landscape character of the site, with the introduction of substantial wind energy development. Significant visual effects for sensitive receptors within 1 kilometre of the site, particularly where there are open views of the proposed development site, reducing with distance from the proposed development site, and cumulative landscape and visual effects limited to distant and more elevated views from the southeast (Knockma Hill, VP19). The location of the site and existing topography and landscape features provides for a level of assimilation of the proposed development into the landscape. No significant residual effects predicted with respect to material assets including land use, telecommunications, electricity networks, air navigation, quarries and utilities. Traffic impacts during construction can be appropriately mitigated.

**Conclusions on Proper Planning and Sustainable Development and
Recommended Reason for Refusal of Planning Permission:**

1. It is a policy of the planning authority as set out in the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 Wetlands, Turloughs, Watercourses and Fens policy objective one (WTWF1) to protect and conserve the ecological and biodiversity heritage of the wetland sites in the county and to ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats that are subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation that might destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the county. This includes lakes and ponds, turloughs, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, fens, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats. Natural Heritage and Biodiversity policy objective four (NHB 4) seeks to ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites.

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity policy objective five (NHB 5) seeks to support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in non-designated sites, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife areas where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

The proposed development includes the construction of a floated access road along the periphery of Cloonbar Bog, which will encroach into uncut raised bog habitat resulting in disruption to groundwater flow feeding the groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystem. Noting that active raised bog is a priority habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive it has been concluded that on the basis of the information submitted with the application there is insufficient site and project specific peatland evidence to support a robust independent appraisal of the conservation value of Cloonbar Bog and to predict the likely implications of the proposed development for peatland ecology and bog restoration. Having regard to the application site configuration and to the complex hydrological and hydrogeological conditions pertaining on-site and on the adjoining lands, to the limited investigation carried out of those conditions and hence to the potentially inadequate mitigation outcomes associated with the proposed development, it is considered that it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse effect on Cloonbar Bog and on peatland ecology and restoration. The Commission is not satisfied that the proposed development will not result in a significant loss of biodiversity. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030, the objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. Having regard to the hydrogeological setting of the site and particularly the presence of karst below and in the local and regional setting of the site and

based on the information submitted the Commission is not satisfied that the application has adequately addressed the alteration of peat groundwater flow and link between karst and hydrogeological pollution risks. The absence of an integrated evidence based hydrogeological conceptual model that considers the relationship between the site local geology and hydrology does not allow the hazards and risks to be identified and evaluated. The Commission is of the view that the evidence presented does not robustly support the lack of potential effects on Shrle Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000525) and Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000297) due to the lack of an overarching, three dimensional and transient, consistent conceptual hydrogeological model that links the local and site level geology and hydrology. Therefore, it cannot be assumed beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites and would not give rise to a risk of deterioration in the ecological and /or chemical status of a water body contrary to the requirements of Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60), as transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No 722 of 2003), as amended and would be inconsistent with the objectives of the Water Action Plan 2024 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

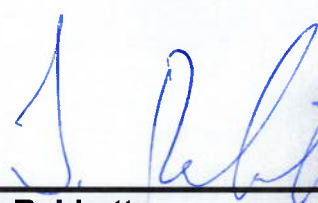
The Commission is satisfied that a refusal for the reasons as indicated above is consistent with the Climate Action Plan 2025 and the 'national climate objective' to pursue and achieve the transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate neutral economy by the end of the year 2050. While the proposed development would contribute to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the potential for significant loss of biodiversity given the impact on Cloonbar Bog and the uncertainty regarding pollution risk and potential for adverse implications arising for Shrle Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000525) and Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000297) and the precedent it would set, would not pursue, or contribute to the achievement of, a biodiversity-rich economy, as required under the national climate objective. The Commission is satisfied that

a refusal of permission as indicated above is consistent with its obligations under section 15(1)(a) and (d) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended.

Schedule of Costs

In accordance with the provisions of section 37H(2)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the amount due to be refunded to the developer is **€12,155**.

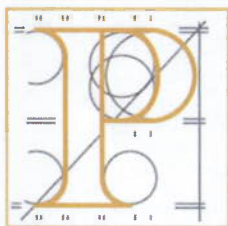
A breakdown of the Commission's costs is set out in the attached Appendix 1.



Tom Rabbette

**Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún
Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Commission.**

Dated this 21st day of Sept. 2026



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

**Commission Order –
Appendix 1**

ACP-323699-25

Strategic Infrastructure Development

Costs of determining the Application

Case Number: ACP-323699-25

Proposed Development: Eleven number turbine wind farm and associated infrastructure in the townlands of Beagh, Beagh More, Cloonbar, Cloonweelaun, Cloonnaglasha, Cloonteen, Corillaun, Derrymore, Ironpool, Shancloon, Toberroe and Tonacoolen, Co. Galway.

Commission Costs		
(1)	Cost (calculated based on Inspector's time) Inspector 1 (pre-application consultation) €3,944 Inspector 2 (application) €61,184	€65,128
(2)	Costs invoiced to Commission: Specialist Consultant Report – BW Consultant Engineer Ltd. Hydrogeological Review Report – JD Solutions	€23,202 €7,565
	Total chargeable costs	€95,895
Commission Fees		
(3)	Application Fee - €100,000 Pre-application Consultation Fee- €1,000	€101,000
(4)	Observer fees paid	€7,050
	Total	€108,050
	Net amount due to be refunded to the applicant	€12,155



Tom Rabbette

Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún

**Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Commission.**

Dated this 21st **day of**

